

Central Intelligence Agency



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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Comments on January Arms Talks

Soviet commentators have argued that substantive progress depends on the actions and attitudes of the United States:

- In a Literaturnaya Gazeta article on 28 November, Central Committee member Leonid Zamyatin said that the administration's response to "specific" Soviet proposals will provide a "test" of its interest in arms control and improved relations.
- A Pravda article on 2 December asserted that the Soviet Union had taken its step and now was awaiting action by the United States.

By claiming that the ball is in the US court, the Soviets hope to put domestic and international pressure on the administration as it prepares for the Geneva meeting and to lay the groundwork for blaming the United States should the talks fail to produce results. [redacted]

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Although Soviet commentators have expressed skepticism about whether the United States is prepared to take concrete steps, they generally have reserved judgment about the administration's future course of action. They have asserted that the administration agreed to the talks because of pressure from American public opinion, concern expressed by NATO allies, and budgetary constraints. In public statements and in a series of demarches to US allies, the Soviets have claimed credit for proposing the talks. [redacted]

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Agenda

Space Weapons. Public and private Soviet statements indicate that discussion of space weapons is a priority in Soviet thinking:

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Soviet commentaries may signal Moscow's unwillingness to accept space weapon limitations that deal only with ASAT weapons and not with the SDI, foreshadowing tough Soviet bargaining on the issue:

- A Pravda commentary on 3 December stressed the priority of the space weapons issue for the January meeting and called for a total ban on "space strike weapons," including both anti-satellite and anti-missile weapons.
- An article in Sovetskaya Rossiya on 30 November characterized the SDI as an "obstacle" to achieving an arms control agreement with the United States.

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START Issues. Some public and private statements by Soviet officials suggest that Moscow may attempt to use perceived US interest in a strategic nuclear arms agreement as bargaining leverage to achieve Soviet negotiating objectives on space weapons:

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- In a meeting on 3 December with a Western ambassador, First Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko asserted that there could be no agreement on strategic arms without agreement on other major issues. He indicated that there were "organic links" between strategic, INF, and space weapons.
- A senior Soviet Foreign Ministry official last week told members of the US nuclear non-proliferation delegation in Moscow that an agreement on nuclear weapons would be "senseless" without an agreement on space weapons but indicated that the latter need not be reached first.

-- A Soviet diplomat in Western Europe reportedly said in late November that if the United States proceeds with the testing and deployment of space-based weapons such as ABM systems, arms control agreements in any other field would be impossible.

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INF Issues. Moscow also probably will take a tough position on INF issues despite not having made the removal of US missiles from Europe a precondition for the January talks:

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The Soviets almost certainly will place renewed emphasis on disrupting NATO's consensus on additional INF deployments by claiming Soviet readiness to seek a negotiated solution to the INF question:

- Soviet public and private assertions that Moscow's "counterdeployments" to US INF missiles have restored the balance in Europe could set the stage for a Soviet proposal for a mutual moratorium on further US and Soviet deployments.
- The Soviets might calculate that such a proposal would exacerbate existing political difficulties on the INF basing issue in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Chernenko, in a public statement following the visit by the British Labor Party delegation, said that the issue of Soviet operational tactical missiles in the GDR and Czechoslovakia--deployed after US INF deployments were begun--would have to be decided in conjunction with further "actions" of the US side. This remark may indicate that the Soviets will seek to include these missiles in the negotiations, possibly proposing that a reduction in deployed US INF missiles would be matched by a withdrawal of Soviet SS-12s from Eastern Europe.

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Modalities

Recent private statements by Soviet leaders and officials suggest that Moscow views the January meeting in Geneva as possibly the first of a series of preliminary agenda-setting meetings, with actual negotiations perhaps deferred for a considerable period:

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The Soviets might calculate that a delay in the beginning of actual negotiations would further pressure the administration to move toward the Soviet agenda. It also could provide the Soviets time to assess NATO's resolve to continue INF deployments. The Soviets also may believe that they will be in a stronger negotiating position on START issues a year from now, once deployments of new SLCMs and of new SS-X-25 and SS-X-24 ICBMs are under way.

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Summit

On 28 November, following a meeting with Chernenko, American industrialist Armand Hammer claimed publicly that the Soviet leader had indicated an early summit meeting with President Reagan was possible if Washington met certain conditions. According to Hammer, Chernenko said he would agree to such a meeting if the United States accepted the Soviet proposal for a treaty banning the first use of nuclear weapons and if the January meeting were successful:

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- When asked about a summit in his 17 November interview with NBC news, Chernenko replied that he did not believe the conditions were yet right for a summit to yield results. He added that if there were confidence that a summit would yield positive results, it would not be difficult to set a date for such a meeting.
- An article in Sovetskaya Rossiya on November 30 printed an earlier quote from Chernenko in which he recalled the June 1979 US-Soviet summit and claimed that it had been an important step in improving US-Soviet relations.

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The Soviets probably are floating the idea of a summit at this time as an inducement to Washington to be accommodating in the January meeting. The Soviets might consider holding a summit to lay out the basic framework for a future strategic arms control agreement. They almost certainly would insist, however, that agreement be reached beforehand on the fundamental elements of a treaty--limits on central strategic systems, INF missiles, and an accounting for French and British and US forward based systems--and argue that it should be an evolutionary agreement based on SALT II.

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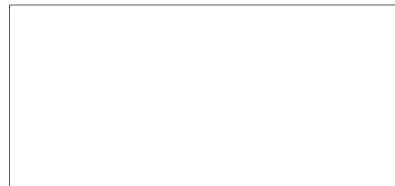
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